

# SPONSA REGIS



A SPIRITUAL REVIEW FOR SISTERS

June  
1953

SPONSA REGIS

is a spiritual review for all Sisterhoods, published monthly, with ecclesiastical approval, by monks of St. John's Abbey, at Collegeville, Minnesota.

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OUR COVER DESIGN represents St. John the Evangelist in his vision, as he beheld the Heavenly Jerusalem, the "Bride of the Lamb", descending from God to man on earth. That symbol also stands for each consecrated spouse of Christ in religion.

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JUNE, 1953 VOL. XXIV, NO. 10

## ENTHRONEMENT OF THE SACRED HEART IN CONVENTS<sup>1</sup>

*"After the public worship of God we will spread two tables in our houses, one with the fare of the body and one with the food of Holy Scripture; one with the fruits of earth and one with the fruits of the Holy Ghost. Prayer and teaching in the Church are not enough; they must be accompanied by prayer and reading at home, for the home is a little Church, an ecclesia domestica" (St. John Chrysostom).*

THE home, a Church! For many in our modern world that has the accent of a foreign tongue. But it is just the tongue that needs to be understood again today, when we consider that in the home lies the foundation stone of Christianity itself. The convent is also a home, where Sisters live most of their religious life in charity and under obedience to their spiritual mother.

The convent home must be a little Church too. With its special membership under rightful authority it has every reason to be regarded as a miniature of the Mystical Body of Christ. Christ is its invisible Head, and should be its Lord and King and Bridegroom. This fact imposes an obligation on all, namely, to master the profound concept of the Church as announced in the New Testament and in the teaching and tradition of the Church, and that all strive earnestly to fashion their convent home after its pattern. For as a miniature of the Mystical Body

<sup>1</sup> Adapted, with the author's permission from his article in *Emmaus*, New Series, Vol. 4, No. 1.



of Christ the convent is to be animated, dominated, and transformed in all departments of life by the Spirit of Christ.

The first point to realize is that all the religious present are special members of the family of God and constitute a holy people, a spiritual edifice. Then, to relive the life of Christ in each member singly and in union with the others. All are to work at building up a holy community, "a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5 : 27). Here we have a living body, wherein "faith worketh by charity" (Gal. 5 : 6), where the religious and moral life flows from the individual into the whole body, and from the whole body to every individual, in a constant interchange of life and blessing. Withdrawn from the world and dedicated forever to God, this unit of the Mystical Body shows its inner oneness and demonstrates to an unspiritual world that it is united to Christ "in one body and spirit" (Eph. 4 : 4). How can this ideal be accomplished?

Father Matheo Crawley-Boevey, of the Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Picpus, is the founder and organizer of a wonderful crusade of love, the Enthronement of the Sacred Heart in the home. In gratitude for a miraculous cure at the great shrine of the Sacred Heart at Paray-le-Monial, he set to work to establish the reign of the Sacred Heart throughout the world. When in Rome he laid his desires and plans before Pius X and asked the Holy Father's permission to preach the Enthronement. "No, my son," replied the saintly Pontiff. Father Matheo, thinking he had not been sufficiently clear in his exposition, made a second attempt to explain his work, but received the same negative answer. Wherefore he looked inquiringly up to the Holy Father, who smiled affectionately and said, "No, my son, I do not give you permission, but I command you to devote your whole life to this work, for it is a work of social salvation."

Since then Pope Benedict XV has granted a Brief in the form of an autograph letter to Father Matheo. This remarkable document is the official and permanent seal on the work. In it the Holy Father emphasizes the great importance of the work of Enthronement and says of it, "Nihil ad haec tempora opportunius" (nothing is more timely for our times). Pope Pius XI has again

renewed all the encouragement of his august predecessors. In an autograph letter dated December 23, 1923, His Holiness urged Father Matheo to carry on the work of Enthronement with ever-increasing confidence and devotedness, "For," adds the Holy Father, "it is now, if ever, in the great upheaveal of all things, a most pressing need that the Lord Jesus, the King of peace, who alone is the Way, the Truth and the Life, should rule the social life of men."

Again, our present Holy Father, Pius XII, gave papal approval to the work in a letter of felicitation dated July 13, 1942, on the occasion of Father Matheo's religious golden jubilee. He wrote, "We know with what exceptionally effective zeal you have exercised, in the course of this half-century, the ministry of the Gospel, aiming particularly at the Enthronement of the Sacred Heart in families. As the tireless apostle of the pious work, which is so apt to foster the reign of love, mercy, and peace in homes and in nations, you have unceasingly carried it on in order that it might be known, appreciated, and adopted in the various continents to which Divine Providence has guided your steps."

The Enthronement is the official and social recognition of the sovereignty of the Sacred Heart of Jesus over the Christian family, a recognition affirmed, outwardly expressed, and made permanent by the solemn installation of the image of the Sacred Heart in the most conspicuous place in the home and by the act of consecration. This purpose ought to be sufficient reason to induce all religious communities to join in this crusade of love and to begin by having the Enthronement of the Sacred Heart in their own convents.

The Enthronement is a true, living, fervent devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which is practiced and fostered in the home circle. "It is a holy and salutary work," as Benedict XV calls it. It is a life, a power destined to renew the Christian and religious spirit. Not a mere blessing of a picture, nor a mere act of consecration, nor a mere passing ceremony — the Enthronement is much more. By it the members of a religious family solemnly and officially proclaim and set up in their home the social Kingship of the Heart of Christ. The name Enthronement is derived from this special characteristic. Hence also the picture or statue of the Sacred Heart is installed, not anywhere in the house, but in the place of honor, "*tanquam in throno*," says Benedict XV. "We attach great importance," His Holiness declared in an explanation

to the Cardinal Prefect of the Propaganda, January 16, 1919, "to the fact that it be not merely a passing consecration of the family to the Sacred Heart, a little family feast, which tomorrow perhaps is forgotten, but that in reality Jesus be placed upon a throne in the family, that in very truth He remain there as King."

We see, then, that the Enthronement is a solemn act. Some persons think that the whole work of the Enthronement is based on the particular promise of the Sacred Heart to bless the homes where His image is exposed and honored: "I will bless every dwelling in which an image of My Heart will be exposed and honored." They imagine the work to be merely to propagate and diffuse the image of the Sacred Heart in all homes so as to draw down upon them the promised blessing. Consequently, these persons consider the Enthronement to be one of those numerous devotions of supererogation, which, no doubt, are all good in themselves, but which by reason of their multiplicity and often encumbering practices not rarely produce the contrary effect to that which was intended. They hamper and kill devotion instead of helping and increasing it.

The Enthronement cannot be called a devotion in the ordinary sense of the word. It promotes and preaches a way of life. According to Our Lord's promise His Sacred Heart is to be "honored." The Enthronement applies the principles of our religion to everyday life. It associates the loving Person of our divine Lord with every detail of community life. It insists on the spirit and not the letter of devotion. It transforms our life, giving to everything the soul of divine love. If the Enthronement stresses certain practices (First Friday, Holy Hour, etc.) specified by the Sacred Heart Himself, it takes care to stress the motive of love and reparation for which they were asked. It also seeks to extend the reign of the Sacred Heart to all society. The words of Our Blessed Lord to St. Margaret Mary are its watchword: "I will reign by My Sacred Heart." This program sums up all the desires and demands of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Let us consider this motto under two headings.

#### I. CHRIST'S SOCIAL KINGSHIP

Jesus Christ is the *supreme Master* of the world, 1) because He is God, the immortal King of ages, to whom alone is due all honor and glory; 2) because He is the Man-God, to whom all power is given in heaven and on earth; and 3) because He is the Redeemer of mankind, Lord and Master of us all by right of conquest.



This sovereignty of our Lord is absolute. It embraces all persons, times, and places. We are subject to Him both in body and soul, in our private and public social life. Jesus Christ has claim to every part of our being, to every detail of our life. Even our inmost thoughts fall under His sway and will have to be justified in the final account of our stewardship. Finally, His authority extends over all society.

When a home accepts the Enthronement, its members emphasize the absolute principle of our Lord's supreme authority, and they loudly proclaim the sovereign rights of the Sacred Heart to rule over them as individuals and as a community. Our Blessed Lord is enthroned, not only at certain times and in certain places, but at all times and in all places, not only in one or other detail, but in every detail of life, not only over each one individually, but over the community as a family, as a social unit, as a vital cell of the Church and the nation.

In accordance with this solemn and official proclamation of Christ's social Kingship made in the presence of the priest, who presides over the ceremony, the members pledge themselves to observe the Commandments of God and of the Church and the Counsels of the religious life. Superior and subjects will be solely guided in their mutual relations by the divine will and law, by the wisdom and traditions incorporated in their holy order. They accept their community work and apostolate of teaching the young, or of caring for the sick, etc., after the word and example of Jesus Himself. All the social virtues, all the interior life and its relations with the Church are put under the gentle sway of His loving Heart.

In such a dedicated community all realize that the welfare of society depends on the practical recognition of the Kingship of Christ's love. He Himself is the foundation of all order, peace, and happiness. If He is banished from society, the whole social equilibrium is gone. This accounts for the terrible disturbances in the world in our time and for the failure of so many attempts to restore order and peace in many countries. "I will give peace to their families." Welcome, then, to our King! To Him be given the place of honor in every religious home.

## II. CHRIST'S KINGSHIP OF LOVE

Herewith the Enthronement touches the spirit of the law rather than its letter, the love of free service well carried out

rather than a hard submission wrung from slaves. We are His friends. He dwells among us as Friend and Shepherd, as the merciful Physician of souls. For us members of His household He is not the terrible Yahweh of the Jews, far out of reach, but the Word Incarnate who came down from heaven and dwells among us.

The Enthronement of the Sacred Heart greatly promotes this wonderful relation of love among the members of a community and Jesus. It enthrones the authentic Jesus of the Gospels, who went about doing good, who sought to come in contact with every human distress and weakness in order to comfort and heal. Jesus, who was so near to everyone, so approachable at all times, even at the end of a hard day's work, comes with His blessing. During the night Nicodemus, for fear of the Pharisees, sought an interview with Him. Jesus, the intimate friend of Mary and Martha and Lazarus, that wonderful family of Bethany, repaired to their home when His apostolic labor found Him in the neighborhood. There He sat at table with His friends. There, in one word, He found a welcome and felt perfectly at home. And the happy members of that privileged home had no secrets from their Friend. They told Him their joys and sorrows, their hopes and fears. They consulted Him on every occasion and trusted Him in every eventuality. And Jesus never failed them. How touching the account of the raising of Lazarus, where the friendship of Jesus appears so charmingly human and so gloriously divine.

All this exquisite friendship of Jesus is reenacted in the convent home by means of the Enthronement. Our Blessed Lord is still the same, full of tender love and mercy, still in search of homes like those of Mary and Martha, to be the intimate Friend of consecrated souls, to reveal the secret treasures of His Heart to them, and to receive their consolation for the ingratitude He suffers from so many others in the world. The picture enthroned and honored gives constant love and service and reparation to the Sacred Heart, and reminds religious of His sacramental presence in the Holy Eucharist in their chapel.

Real friendship with Jesus means treating Him as the living and beloved divine Friend that He truly is. It means intimacy and confidence, immediate recourse to Him in joys and sorrows, in doubts and difficulties; it means also resignation under trial. Always intent



on the desires of His Sacred Heart, the devoted religious will constantly devise new ways of honoring Him. The act of consecration will be frequently renewed by the community gathered together, also when fraternal charity needs the divine Friend.

In an audience with Cardinal Dubois, Archbishop of Rouen, Benedict XV insisted on having the consecration take place in the family and desired it to be performed by the priest. "A general consecration in the church," he declared, "does not bring out the ultimate purpose of this devotion." The Enthronement is something for the home circle. When a religious community desires to have the Enthronement, the priest should be invited in order to bless the picture or statue of the Sacred Heart and to conduct the whole ceremony in the name of the Church. His presence gives to the act its official character and is required for gaining the indulgences (Acta A. S. 1918, pages 154-156). The same indulgences as are gained by a family group may be gained under the usual conditions by the members of other institutes (religious community, college, school, etc.) both on the day when the consecration is made the first time and each year on the day when it is renewed, provided they make use of a form approved by the Ordinary (S. P. Ap., Dec. 30, 1923).

The ceremony should be performed as solemnly as possible. The room should be neat and the place of honor prepared. There should be, if possible, a devotional and sufficiently large picture or statue of the Sacred Heart erected amid lights and flowers. The Act of Consecration should be at hand to be signed by the priest and by the members after the ceremony. The priest, vested in surplice and stole, blesses the statue or picture with the prescribed form and sets it up in an honored and prominent place. Then all recite the Apostles' Creed. Next, the priest delivers a short address about the ceremony and the obligations. Finally, all members of the household pronounce the Act of Consecration. (For complete information, ceremonial, and documents, write to National Center of the Enthronement, 4930 S. Dakota Avenue N.E., Washington 17, D.C.)

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## MYSTICAL ROSE

**F**LOWERS belong to the most beautiful things of our visible creation. They seem to be remnants of Paradise, to carry so little of the curse that rests on this earth in consequence of man's transgression. The very word conjures up before our minds sunshine and blue skies, jeweled meadows and blooming gardens, fragrant breezes and sprouting life. No wonder, men love flowers and use them as signs and symbols of their joy and hope, as symbols of virtues. Christians will always associate flowers with the heavenly Paradise and see in the saints the flowers blooming there eternally. The queen of flowers is the rose. So we cannot be surprised that the Queen of saints is likened to the rose. She is called the Mystical Rose, the rose that encloses within itself mysteries of beauty and loveliness. We discover mysteries in her origin, in her unfolding and blooming on earth, in her heavenly transfiguration. As the Mystical Rose she blooms forever in the heavenly Paradise, a delight for God and all the angels and saints.

### ORIGIN

All creation has its beginning in the eternal decrees of the Creator, but there is priority in these decrees as to rank and importance of things created. The end and purpose of all creation, "the firstborn of every creature," as St. Paul puts it, is Jesus Christ, the God-man. In Him creation was to find its consummation and crown, since in Him all orders of created things were represented and carried back to their Creator. Thus St. Paul writes, "In Him were created all things, in the heavens and on the earth, things visible and things invisible. . . . All things have been created through Him and unto Him, and He is before all creatures, and in Him all things hold together" (Col. 1 : 16). Mary stands next to Christ, as His Mother is second to Christ in those eternal decrees. Therefore holy Church can apply to her what is said of the Incarnate Word of God Himself, "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His ways before He made anything from the beginning. I was set up from eternity and of old, before the earth was made" (Prov. 8 : 22). The Mystical Rose has her roots in the depths of the Godhead.

There came the moment of creation, when the almighty *fiat* called this whole universe of ours into existence. Then

followed sin, and it seemed as if God's plans had miscarried; yet God's decrees cannot be thwarted, and the Fall of our first parents only serves to set into stronger relief the grandeur of the wisdom, power, and love of those decrees. An indication of it is given right after the Fall. Is it not significant that then and there, amid the bloom and fragrance of the flowers of Paradise, the first mention is made of her who would be the Mystical Rose, the Queen of the heavenly Paradise? "And the Lord God said to the serpent, 'I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel'" (Gen. 3 : 15). Even though the earthly Paradise had been lost for men, the plans for the heavenly Paradise are all ready. There shall bloom forever living flowers, more beautiful than those of the earthly Paradise, and their Queen shall be she who has crushed the serpent's head, the Mystical Rose.

#### UNFOLDING OF THE ROSE

In the stillness of the morning, under the rays of the rising sun and the moisture of heavenly dew, the rose bud slowly opens. One by one her tender petals unfold until she shines in all her queenly beauty. So heaven's Mystical Rose began to stir and to sprout in the holy ground of a chosen ancestry and holy home. The rays of the Holy Spirit's love awakened her to life in all her wondrous beauty. "All fair art thou, O Mary, and the stain of original sin is not in thee." "Grace is poured abroad in thy lips; therefore hath God blessed thee forever. With thy comeliness and thy beauty set out, proceed prosperously, and reign" (Common Office of the Blessed Virgin). From the first moment of the awakening of her reason all her thoughts and desires were centered in God. Like her divine Son, she advanced in age and wisdom and grace before God and men. What an advance this must have been, when we consider the perfection of her soul and the power of grace working in her! So the Rose unfolds: faith deepens, hope grows stronger, the flames of love reach higher, and all the moral virtues make her the delight of her fellow men. Mary was the rose that the Holy Spirit would offer to the Son of the eternal Father on the day of His espousals with the human race, the pattern of "the Church in all her glory, not having spot or wrinkle or any



such thing, but that she might be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5 : 27).

#### IN FULL BLOOM

We behold this Mystical Rose in full bloom on the day of the Annunciation, when the "Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." A heavenly spirit, whose very name proclaims the power of God, stands before the Virgin in awe and reverence, admiring the work of power and love that surpasses all he has witnessed among the heavenly spirits. As Mother of Christ Mary also becomes the companion and ornament of the Redeemer; the Mystical Rose unfolds more and more of her mysteries. She is the white Rose that blooms in spotless purity, unworldliness, and piety during the Savior's infancy and hidden life at Nazareth, "The brightness of eternal light and the unspotted mirror of God's majesty and the image of His goodness" (Mass of the Most Pure Heart of Mary). As the years pass and the bloody glare of the Passion envelops the mind of the Blessed Mother, the white of the Mystical Rose changes into red to match the bloody shades of Calvary. It is her Son of whom the prophet speaks, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bosra, this beautiful one in his robe? Why then is thy apparel red and thy garments like theirs that tread in the winepress? I have trodden the winepress alone and of the nations there is not a man with me" (Is. 63:lff.). St. John, too, beholds the Savior as "Clothed in a garment sprinkled with blood, and his name is called *The Word of God*" (Apoc. 19 : 13), who has conquered in the Blood of the Passion. Mary was with Him and, sprinkled with His Blood, she now shows the deep bloody red of the Mystical Rose. She is the red Rose comforting the suffering Savior in His Passion. At last the red turns into bright triumphant gold in the glorious mysteries of her life. She who so faithfully shared in His Passion now also shares in His joy and victory. She is the ornament and crown of the glorified Savior. White, red, and gold are the ground colors of this Mystical Rose; they intermingle and form new combinations and patterns without number, as they come into contact with the varying conditions of life. Thus they appear as piety and trust in God, retirement and unworldliness, courage, patience, mildness, mercy, humility, perseverance in love, and self-immolation to the end.

In like manner the fragrance of the Mystical Rose exceeds in sweetness and stimulating power all scents and perfumes ever known to men and used for their pleasure, or to heighten the solemnity of festive gatherings and functions. Holy Scripture and the Liturgy speak of the sweet odor of a holy life. There is no holier life among the saints of heaven and of the earth than that of the Blessed Virgin. As she unites in herself the virtues of all the saints, so there emanates from her the fragrance of every virtue and, as it pervades the Church Militant, so it will fill the heavenly banquet hall with its refreshing and mysterious aroma.

Earth was not the lasting abode for such beauty as that of the Mystical Rose. So the day came when she was transplanted from this earth to the heavenly Paradise, and that not only in soul but also in body, "A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon was under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars" (Feast of the Assumption, Introit). Now the mysteries contained in that Mystical Rose shine out into the vast expanses of heaven to fill the angels and saints with reverence and delight for all eternity.

Holy Scripture speaks of men as flowers, and the Church on earth is the Paradise in which they are to unfold and to bloom until they are transplanted into heaven. Here we ought to recall our relation to Mary as that of children to their Mother and view that relation under the aspect of Mary, the Mystical Rose. This Mystical Rose brings forth not only roses but every flower that blooms in the Paradise of the Church. This fruitfulness of the Mystical Rose is a feature which no earthly rose possesses. The saints are all her offspring; they differ, just as flowers differ, in form and color and fragrance, but they all look up to Mary as their Mother, the pattern and inspiration of their holiness. Just as the kaleidoscope will show a well nigh infinite number of patterns, so this Mystical Rose offers ever new patterns of virtue striking in their beauty and variety. This Mystical Rose never dies. She is the fruitful Mother of all saints, those who were her contemporaries as well as those of our times and those who will live in times to come. And so with the appearance of the Mystical Rose, "The winter is now passed, the rain is over and gone, the flowers have appeared in our land" (Canticle 2:11f.). May we be among them!

A. BISKUPEK, S.V.D.

LESSONS OF DEATH<sup>1</sup>

I N his absorbing autobiography, Andrea Majocchi, one of Italy's foremost surgeons, found that, as the years rolled on, the specter of death haunted him:

"I exorcise it with work, but it comes back when I am idle . . . Death is the doctor's personal enemy. All our labor is directed to combating it, averting it, snatching some victim away from its clutches. And the very fact that I have spent my days in the constant, desperate battle brings up another question: What is the aim of life? Why so many battles, why so much suffering? What end do man's never-ending efforts serve?"

And he goes on to tell, with wonderful simplicity, how the memory of his mother teaching him why we were brought into the world became for him the solution, the oracle that held all the world's wisdom. "God," explained his mother, "God brought us here to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him in this life, that we may enjoy Him in another world."

Yes, the first page of our catechism gives us the clue to the meaning of death. But death is, by God's law, the final teacher.

We know death will come. Of what use the millions of dollars to a Carnegie, a Rockefeller, a Ford, if they do not use them for God's glory and honor and the welfare of their fellow men? To what purpose is all luxury and sensual joy and pleasure and self-gratification? What good is beauty and charm and grace of body! When death sets forth, he tramples all these underfoot. Like the monstrous Juggernaut of India, he crushes all before him into red ruin to make a path for his forward march.

Of what avail are all talents, all learning, all abilities, honors, distinctions, degrees, if they have not been used for God and our fellow men, if they have not been used by their possessors as investments for eternity? All is vanity. All comes to an end sooner or later.

And so, the simplest lesson of all to master at the feet of death is: DETACHMENT. Detach yourself from the passing transitory things of this brief world. The more you shake loose from these things now, the easier it will be for you to leave them definitely at the hour of death.

<sup>1</sup> This is part of the author's forthcoming booklet entitled *This Business Called Dying*.



Just reflect for a minute on the great figures of the world and how truly monumentally stupid they were regarding this great but simple lesson. Napoleon's whirlwind of victorious campaigns ended with him a lonely exile on the rock-ribbed island of St. Helena, a dot in the immensity of the ocean. Yet his last years were spent in concocting his memoirs to justify himself to posterity, in a vain attempt to hand down to coming generations the picture of Napoleon as he desired it to be painted! If he had used those ebbing years to turn to his God, turning his back on the faded laurels of his triumphs, would he not have proved himself a sage, a truly "great" figure?

Or Alexander. Striving for greater glory, he found he had conquered the whole known world. With no more worlds to subdue to his sword, he wept. Says one learned writer: "Anthony sought for happiness in love, Brutus in glory, Caesar in dominion. The first found disgrace; the second, disgust; the last, ingratitude; and each, destruction."

Detach yourself from the things that death will abolish with one fell sweep. Our heart cannot be at rest unless in God, as St. Augustine cried out so many centuries ago. Desires and dreams of the human soul, longings and loves of the flesh, let these foolish aspirations not disturb and distract us from our proper paths.

Years ago, a famous actor stood outside a thronged theater on the Great White Way of Broadway, where he had just given a performance that won him enthusiastic applause. His manager, who urged him to greet some friends outside the theater, probably with an eye to some cheap publicity, wondered at the sadness of his face, and asked what was the matter.

"I'm just waiting," said the actor, "for all these lights to go out, so I can go home to my little home in the country where I can go out on my lawn, look up at the stars in heaven, and be alone with my soul for a minute."

Wiser than most was he . . .

Another lesson is inexorably underlined by death: All sickness, sufferings, adversities, trials of all kinds, how different do they appear when we view them in the light of death! Everything will come to an end—and so our daily crosses will end also. Have patience and look upon every cross as a "Misericordia Dei"

— a mercy of God, just as St. John of the Cross and St. Camillus deLellis did. Use them as means to detach yourselves more and more from creatures and earthly things. By bearing our crosses resignedly, patiently, even cheerfully, we can make these privations or hardships fruitful for eternity. More and more shall we thus become attached to the eternal God. Mourning and moaning and groaning and complaining will not change anything; but courage and a brave spirit will help us carry our burden until the end.

And the most important lesson of the stern teacher is, of course, the proper viewing of sin in the light of death. On our deathbed, as the candle of life flickers low, oh how different will sin appear to us. How different from the aspect sin takes in our daily life. Repeat this truth until you truly believe it: ALL IS VANITY. Sin especially is vanity..., every deliberate sin, the only evil that exists. When forbidden fruits appear to have a special savor, when temptations glitter alluringly, when seduction weaves a magic net, think of death and the mouldering dust in the grave.

What folly is sin! What vanity! All scent of roses here on earth is mingled with the odor of decay. Into each gay roundelay of music reverberates the awesome tolling of the death knell. Shrouding and blotting out the will-of-the-wisp glitter of the carnival of the world's amusements comes the gloom of death. "Remember thy last things and thou shalt not sin!"

\* \* \*

I can just see you lay down this article and protest: "If everything on earth is vanity, and all is just a passing scene, how can I ever enjoy life and have any ambition to work and to labor and to accomplish something? Surely God did not give me the gift of life just to refuse to use it?"

The answer is: if nothing else but vanities and empty ambitions and enterprises were our share here on earth, this would be a sad life indeed. What a cruel game would life be! But thanks be to God, there is something under the sun which is not vanity, but truth and utter peace and joy and happiness.

What is it? The golden book of the *Imitation of Christ* tells us in a wonderful phrase: "Vanity of vanities and all is vanity, EXCEPT TO LOVE GOD AND TO SERVE HIM ALONE."

To love God and to serve Him alone — He who is infinitely great and beautiful and rich, instead of loving the mortal satraps of this earth and all the trifling honors and riches of this depressing domain of mortality. To love Him who alone is the supreme and infinite Good, able to fill and satisfy the human heart. "Love God," urges St. Augustine, "and you will find nothing better than Him!"

Death, viewed in this perspective, should not depress or discourage us from our lawful activities. Rather, death will encourage us to "work as long as there is the day, for the night cometh when we can work no more." The radiance of eternity will beam from our faces; the despair of futility will not darken our outlook.

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*Girard, Pennsylvania*

## I SLEPT DURING MEDITATION

**I**N the May 1952 issue of *The Priest* the quiz man gave a rather amusing answer, with a still more amusing implication, to the question: "The assistant is saying the Mass and the pastor is preaching. The said assistant sleeps during the sermon. Should I tell him to go into the sacristy till the sermon is over?" The reply was: "Make your sermon short — ten or fifteen minutes. Don't send him into the sacristy. It would be against the rubrics. Do the people also sleep?"

In that same issue a certain *Anonymous* writes, among other things, "I once heard the now Bishop Fulton Sheen say that he found it impossible to meditate at that early hour in the seminary (six-thirty), and that he believed it was physically and psychologically impossible for the average American boy (or priest?) to meditate before he had his coffee in the morning. In his retreats to priests he eliminates the morning meditation before Mass, and substitutes at that time a period of prayer in preparation for Mass. This, he believes, is the usual custom of priests in parish life. Note: he doesn't eliminate meditation. He merely changes the hour."

That article was written for American diocesan priests and seemed to take for granted that things are quite different in the case of religious who live in community. "What the religious do in their seminaries, they will also do in community life afterwards, but it is not so with the diocesan priest."



All of which is quite sensible, when you come to think it over. There is in it an implication that religious have a more regular life, go to bed earlier, and hence can meditate early in the morning without being troubled by sleep. But can they?

The fact of the matter is that very many of them cannot meditate in the early morning hours without having to combat fatigue and drowsiness, which is not to say that the morning hours are not the best for the daily meditation. Most religious would probably tell us that they are troubled by sleep no matter at what hour of the day they make their meditation. To this a retreat master would ruefully attest, when he contemplates drooping heads at ten A.M. meditation!

Which reminds me of one retreat master who had prescribed a good long nap every afternoon for all the Sisters in retreat. Already on the first day he happened to meet a Sister in the hallway during the siesta period. "Sister," said he, "you ought to be taking your nap, so that you can stay awake during the conferences." "Father," she replied, "it's no use trying; I cannot sleep during the day, ordinarily." Somewhat mollified, the master inquired kindly: "Well, then I suppose you sleep soundly at night." "No," said she, "I cannot sleep at night either; for years I have been troubled with insomnia." "Why, my dear Sister," exclaimed the astonished priest, "when do you sleep then?" "I'll be frank with you, Father," she said. "The only time I get a good sound sleep each day is during the hour of meditation." Whereupon the two went their respective ways, the retreat master meditating on this new cure for insomnia.

This quite naturally leads to the following rather simple, though somewhat unusual, definition of prayer: "Prayer is a loving communion between the wretchedness of the creature and the loving compassion of the Creator — the Creator who loves us, not in spite of our misery and littleness, but because of it." That sounds like the Little Flower, does it not?

Indeed, it was she who naively said: "I ought to ascribe my aridity to my lack of fervor and fidelity. I ought to be miserable at constantly falling to sleep during my prayers and thanksgivings. Ah well. I do not break my heart about it. I think how little children are just as pleasing to their parents when they are asleep as when they are awake. I remember that Our Lord 'knoweth our frame. He remembereth that we are but dust'" (*Autobiography*, p. 134). "In all my relations with Jesus I feel nothing. Aridity and drowsiness! As my Well-Beloved wants to

sleep I shall not hinder Him. I am glad that He does not treat me like a stranger, that He treats me without ceremony; for, I can assure you, He does not trouble Himself to make conversation" (*The Spirit of St. Therese*, p. 35). It is in this way that we should let drowsiness or even falling asleep in prayer, which is just another human weakness, automatically turn into humility, which in turn will lead to a confident reposing in the arms of our heavenly Father and to a childlike love of God.

Quite legitimately we here ask ourselves, how the Little Flower could calmly say that she did not break her heart about aridity, lack of fervor in prayer, and falling asleep during it. The answer to this query is that all those things were distractions, and distractions in prayer are in no way sinful so long as they are involuntary, as they almost invariably are in well-disposed people. Prayer said with involuntary distraction is still substantially prayer, nor does such distraction deprive the prayer of its impetratory and meritorious value. At the most it deprives the mind of spiritual refection. Not only are involuntary distractions not sinful, but they may even be highly meritorious, inasmuch as our striving to pray in spite of them means striving valiantly to show our loyalty to God. Nay more, distractions are, together with tedium, doubts, and the like, a part of the sufferings of the first night of the soul. "There is also the torment of distractions, which is another consequence of aridity. It is more severe than in the prayer of quiet, because there we have a certain compensation—the possession of God," says Poulain.

I hasten to note here that, if the rule requires that one make a meditation of one hour each day, for example, and if one sleeps during a part of that hour, the time so spent in sleeping may be counted in as a part of the meditation. It is the mind of the law in such cases that involuntary distractions may be reckoned with the time of meditation.

But most of us, I suppose, cannot appreciate or enter into the spirit of the Little Flower in the matter of prayer. We are more like St. Teresa of Avila, the Little Flower's spiritual mother, so to speak. For years, perhaps for a lifetime, we stick to our old methods and to our books, and are rather dazed when we hear that we should discard them and just pray in our own way—and without words even!

In the *Life of St. Teresa*, written by herself, we read: "For my part, I cannot understand why men should fear, as they do, to begin the practice of mental prayer, nor do I know what they are afraid of. The devil, however, strives all he can to make us fearful (in order to do us thereby some real evil) of thinking how much we have offended God, how much we owe Him, that there is a heaven and a hell, and what great labors and sufferings our Lord endured for our sake. This was my prayer, which I continued during all the time I was in these dangers; and thus did I meditate whenever I was able. And often, for some years, I was more desirous that the hour should end, and more anxious to hear the clock strike, than to attend to other good things. And many times it happened, that whatever penance was set before me, however great, I would more willingly have performed it than prepare myself for prayer."

Here it may be well to recall that certain actions are compatible with the essence of prayer, like the following: to walk; to look at the fields, the mountains, the rivers, the lakes; to make the bed; to tend to the furnace; to prepare writing materials; to gather herbs, fruits, flowers; to dress; to wash up; to page one's book for the psalms, lessons, etc. If one wants to keep on praying while doing such things, there is no sin committed by their performance during prayer. One's prayer continues as long as one's intention to pray is not recalled, either directly by a contrary intention, or by an action incompatible with prayer, like chatting with another, writing a letter, listening attentively to others when they speak. To quote again from St. Teresa's autobiography: "But for those who go along this way, it is good to use a book in order to recollect themselves quickly. As to myself, I received profit in looking upon the fields, flowers, and water; in these things I found something to remind me of our Creator — I mean they served to awaken and keep me recollected, and they were as a book to me: They also brought to mind my sins and ingratitude. As regards heavenly things and other such high subjects, my understanding was so dull, that I was never able to represent them to my imagination, until our Lord represented them to me by other means."

In Father Poulain's *The Graces of Interior Prayer* we read in one of the chapters on the prayer of quiet, which is the first stage of the mystic union, in which the divine action is not strong enough to hinder distractions:

"Natural sleep may quite well, alas! overtake us during the prayer of quiet. Some persons who suffer from fatigue are very prone to this infirmity during the morning and evening exercises.



"A semi-slumber may also be experienced under the following conditions: Take a man who is subject to insomnia at night, for instance. He is then in a state of drowsiness, midway between the lucidity of the waking state and sleep; now he is more fully awake, now he slumbers, to return once more to a certain degree of consciousness. If he were in the natural state during this time, the imagination would alternately go off upon some capricious excursion, and then persistently bring back to him the remembrance of some work with which he had been much engaged. But if he has the prayer of quiet, *each time that he thinks about God*, this prayer often replaces, in part, the wanderings of the imagination. It is not a special state of prayer, but the mingling of two states; in one the drowsiness is natural, and the other supernatural" (Chapter 16:24).

I am not for a moment suggesting that those who sleep during meditation are enjoying the prayer of quiet, but am merely throwing in this thought in discussing a matter on which there is so little to say. And, anyhow, in the lives of several of the saints we see that their prayers continued during sleep. Poulain tells us that this was the case with St. Alphonsus Rodriguez, St. Vincent Ferrer, St. Teresa, St. Margaret Mary. "I sleep and my heart watcheth."

But, to get away from the sleep of ecstasy now, to descend from the sublime to the ordinary, let us look at what Rodriguez says in the famous *Practice of Perfection and Christian Virtues*, Vol. I (Loyola University Press, 1929). In chapter twenty-four he speaks of the temptation to sleep, tells us that this is another kind of distraction, that it sometimes arises from natural causes, as want of sleep, great fatigue, the hour when the meditation is made, excessive eating, the suggestions of the devil, our own carelessness, and our taking a posture in prayer that occasions sleep. This last point about posture is well taken. I know from experience that if one experiments with various postures, one will find that by assuming such and such a position sleep can be kept away. Let us say that you meditate sitting and leaning back—and sleep. You find that if you sit upright, or lean forward with your elbows on the table, for instance, you can remain awake. Or you discover that by varying your position, now kneeling, now sitting, now standing, now walking to and fro, you remain wide awake and derive much benefit from the time of meditation. A religious who makes no effort at all to overcome drowsiness, who, for example, slouches comfortably in an armchair and falls

asleep without even a struggle or change of posture, cannot be said to be serious about his prayer life, commits venial sin by voluntary distraction, and endangers growth in the spiritual life. I am not writing for such at all. I am addressing "men of good will."

But to quote a paragraph from the above-mentioned chapter of Rodriguez:

"The principal remedy is that already mentioned, namely, attention and remembering that we are in the presence of God. One would not dare to sleep in the presence of a great sovereign, neither should we dare if we reflected that we are in the presence of the majesty of God regarding us; so reflecting, we should be much ashamed to sleep at meditation. It is also a good remedy to stand up, not to lean against anything, to wash the eyes with cold water, and some are in the habit of carrying a wet handkerchief for that purpose when they are molested with this temptation. Others help themselves by looking up to the sky, by opening the window to the light, or by going to make their meditation in presence of the Blessed Sacrament in company with others, or again by taking a discipline before meditation, which keeps them wide-awake and devout. Others, likewise, at meditation inflict on themselves some pain, which keeps them awake, or if they are alone, they extend their arms for some time in the form of a cross. It is also helpful to recite some vocal prayers -- a great help to keeping awake and lively, as we have said above. There are these and other like remedies, besides begging our Lord to heal us of this infirmity."

Let everyone be on his guard, lest he get so remiss and tepid in prayer that settling down to pray is the same as settling down to sleep. Such carelessness is surely displeasing to God. "Because thou art lukewarm I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth" (Apoc. 3:16). Those who, when they feel drowsy, do not change their posture or do some violence to themselves, so to speak, deserve the reproach of the Savior to Peter: "What, could you not watch one hour with me?" And they, too, in the hour of trial may prove unfaithful, as Peter did.

No matter how much you are distracted in prayer, no matter how great the aridity may be, even if you never feel sweetness and consolation in prayer, you can always make acts of love, praise, thanksgiving, adoration, sorrow, humility, resignation. Tell the Lord you wish to do the best you can and He will be pleased with your dispositions.

If you cannot meditate at all, keep on saying ejaculatory prayers, like "Thy will be done!" "O God, be merciful to me a

sinner!" "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" "Jesus, meek and humble of Heart, make my heart like unto Thine!" "O God, Thou art all-powerful, make me a saint!" "Heart of Jesus, I trust in Thee!" "My Jesus, mercy!" "My God, I love Thee." If you, when powerless to meditate, would say any one of these prayers over and over again, or any other that comes to your mind, you would really make a very good meditation. No matter how great the difficulties, never yield to discouragement, but pray to the end. St. Teresa once said: "The greatest temptation of my life was to give up meditation on account of desolation."

This same great St. Teresa of Avila used a book for seventeen years. She would first read a little and then meditate for a while on what she had read. You can at least do likewise.

*Salvatorian Seminary  
St. Nazianz, Wisconsin*

WINFRID HERBST, S.D.S.

## CLOISTERED IN THE INCARNATION

DEAR SISTER,

I have been thinking much of late about the word mediator and our vocation as other Marys to live as co-mediators. Many circumstances have contributed to the thinking.

A history lesson on the Reformation made me realize with new poignancy the great loss of mediatorial power in the destruction of the priesthood in Europe. Almost to the day, I sighted a headline announcing a four hundred and thirty-fifth anniversary of Luther's revolt, a rejoicing in his "great work." In the write-up was the astounding boast that man can be *his own mediator*. What a sublime contradiction, and yet a grasping after truth.

"There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the MAN Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5). He was constituted Mediator by His Incarnation, for He became the God-Man. He accomplished His mediation by His Passion and Death. He applies the fruits of this mediation by the holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the Sacraments. But to make possible this extension of His mediation into time, He needed the co-operation of men and, therefore, He instituted a mediating priesthood.

That brief summary, by the way, has introduced the third circumstance in my thinking, a powerful address on "Mary in the



Life of a Priest-Adorer," which appeared in a 1949 issue of the French magazine *Marie*. The author pointed out how every priest is constituted a mediator by his ordination, exercises that mediation by his personal life of love and sacrifice, and applies the fruit of it by a zealous and fruitful apostolic life.

The sentence that impressed me most was this: The greater fruitfulness of a priest's ministry depends upon his interior holiness. . . . A priest is a more efficacious mediator (presupposing, of course, the objective efficacy of his sacramental priestly ministrations) in the measure that he enlarges his soul to receive divine grace and makes himself more a man that he may better represent humanity before God.

Isn't that a simple statement of a sublime power that belongs not only to the priest, but to every Christian, and especially the consecrated spouse of Christ? To grow in grace by all the many means at our disposal at every moment, to be more generous and loving in our service of others and thus to live Christ in His role of Mediator—this is what happens when we "step out of self-life into Christ-life;" but to live this we need Mary. Just as the priestly vocation is a grace from her at the same time that it is a grace from God, so our vocation is a Marian gift, a call to live as mediators in Mary, for Mary, by Mary, and through Mary. We can assure ourselves, as the priestly son of Mary assured his fellow priests, that a solid and practical devotion to Mary will be the seed in our lives of sacrifices and immolations, the pledge of fidelity to our holy calling.

How we ought to use that mediatorial power today to win grace and light for those outside the Church who are needing and groping for truth! I remember reading another news item a couple of years ago, that told of some Lutheran ministers advocating a return of "sacrifice" to their Church. How wonderful if we could win them the grace to follow that lead. It would bring them, of course, to the holy Sacrifice of the Mass into which Christ has folded all His mediatorial power, so that the offering made by human hands on an earthly altar can be carried up to the altar on High, where Christ forever makes intercession for us before the Face of His Father.

A priest told me of a Lutheran girl in one of his marriage instruction classes. Twice when they got to the Mass she dropped

out. He asked the young man to bring her over for a private talk. He started with the simple idea of sacrifice as the recognition of God's sovereignty and, therefore, the means of returning to God's favor after sin, which denies Him that sovereignty. Then he made the connection between this concept and Christ's Sacrifice. When he finished, the girl said simply, "I understand. What my Church has *told* me to do, the Catholic Church gives me the *power* to do."

And isn't that exactly what happened? The Reformers took away from the people the *power to do* the very thing they urged them to do — seek salvation through Christ's redeeming grace.

I remember reading a beautiful meditation on the Passion once, by a Maryknoller, I think. One vivid thought remained with me indelibly: when Christ stretched out His arms upon the Cross, as Man He had them *upstretched*, pleading for mankind; as God He had them *outstretched* to enfold the human race. The Mass gives us the power of the arms of Christ, does it not? Especially are we reminded of this in a Dominican Mass, immediately following the Consecration, when the priest flings out his arm in a gesture that embraces the whole world.

That brings me to my last circumstance in this thinking about mediation — a beautiful explanation of "The Missionary Meaning of the Cross" (in *Advent* by Danielou). The whole book made me rejoice at the stirring of the Spirit in the nations of the world and eager to do my share to bring about a new Pentecost. The following analysis of the Cross hits the same two points as the other article, that is, enlarging both the divine and the human, in other words, being more truly CHRISTIAN:

And that is the meaning of the Cross; at once the height and the depth of contemplation, and the length and breadth of charity. It sinks into the depths of God and spreads out to the limits of mankind itself: it withdraws into contemplation of God, and at the same time embraces all men as brothers. That is why, every time we make the sign of the Cross, we bring this to mind; when we raise our hand to our forehead in honouring the Father, it should remind us that we are called to contemplate the Father face to face, and when we move our hand from one shoulder to the other, we should be reminded that the charge of our brethren falls on our shoulders and that we are responsible for them.

Let us make every moment of our lives a note in an eternal hymn of thanksgiving for the Great Sacrament of the Incarnation

which gave us Christ our Mediator. Let us ask for a growing consciousness of our individual mediatorial power as another Christ, another Mary, especially if we use Christ's mediation folded into the holy Sacrifice of the Mass and left in the keeping of men. Your devoted Sister in Mary,

SISTER MARY AQUIN, I.H.M.

*St. Mary, Monroe, Michigan*

## LOVE, THE HOLY EUCHARIST

Christ in the Holy Eucharist,  
I see You hidden here,  
In very essence of Your love.

Become again Incarnate  
In the species of the bread  
You would renew  
Your life, all-hidden  
While the ages wait for You.  
You would renew the consummation  
Of Your Wonder Offering  
By giving souls the Host,  
Thyself all crushed and broken,  
As Wonder Token of Your Love.

And some there are who still revile You,  
Heap blasphemies upon You,  
and bid You, "Come down from Your Cross,  
And we will then believe in You."

But others, too, there are  
Who find their only joy,  
Not in waiting afar off,  
To watch and see  
If You will make descent,  
But with their hearts full pent  
In love,  
Must be with Mary  
And bear with her the scoff  
Of all the mob who call out "Crucify!"

Others, Christ, in love must die with You  
Before their love of You  
Can satiated be.



Christ, accept us as Your lovers true,  
 Bless, us, break us, let us die with You.  
 Then offer us, transformed by Holy Ghost,  
 Our souls the added substance of the Host.  
 Offer the Christed us, the Christed leaven,  
 That this great sinful world be raised to heaven,  
 That souls may know You, Lord,  
 And love and serve Thee,  
 And glory render to the Holy Trinity  
 For all eternity.

L.M.W.

## NOTICE!

Three of the Friendship Houses in the U.S.A. are again having summer schools this year. At those schools students are given a better understanding of the Mystical Body and its relations to modern problems of justice and charity. The lecturers are well-informed priests and laymen. All who are interested should request further information from St. Peter Claver Center, 814 - 7th Street, S.W., Washington 4, D.C.

## LIBRARY NOTES

**Dear Sister.** By Catherine de Hueck. Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. 1953. Pp. 80. Cloth \$2.00.

In the tradition of *Dear Bishop* and *Dear Seminarian*, this is a refreshing and reverent series of letters from the Russian-born baroness who founded Friendship House in America. Now in Canada, engaged in a rural and community, rather than inter-racial, apostolate, she is one of the pioneers to whom all of us are indebted for the present spiritual-social renaissance in U.S. Catholicism.

Fr. Philip Hughes, penetrating Church historian, has remarked, concerning the difficulty of objectively criticizing what is venerable and sacred, that one type of mind will react with a harsh and scathing cynicism, while the critical faculties of another type seem to be paralysed by pious fear. Neither serves the Church, the cause of Christ, well. Catherine de Hueck's spirituality is too genuine to be anything less than reverent..., and anything less than honest.

So she talks about the vocation to the religious life and its dignity, its beauty. And then she speaks as a laywoman in an age of religious awakening, and of that vocation in its relation to the laity and to the awakening. It has been done before. Sisters have written some profound examinations of conscience for themselves and their communities. Last year the Pope himself did it, and in the congress for religious superiors at Rome spoke of meeting the needs of our age as the saints who founded our orders would have met them were they living today. Now it is good to hear the same thing as a cry for help, as a frank recognition that these contemporary beginnings in the lay and social apostolate cannot reach maturity without the whole-hearted collaboration of Religious.

Short enough for the busiest among us, these letters are for us all. A good book for the refectory. Like everything that helps us toward true holiness, it is a grace. R.H.

**History of Mediaeval Philosophy.** Volume One: From the Beginnings to the End of the Twelfth Century. By Maurice De Wulf. Translated by Ernest C. Messenger. Dover Publications, Inc., New York. 1952. Pp. xviii-317. Cloth \$4.00.

The late Professor De Wulf's work has for long been the standard history of mediaeval philosophy, growing from a single volume in the first edition to the three volumes of the latest sixth edition. The author was able to complete work on the third volume in 1947, shortly before his death. English translations of volumes two and three are soon to be published. The present volume traces the development of thought from the age of St. Augustine to that of Joachim of Floris and includes a chapter on Byzantine, Jewish and Arabian philosophy. De Wulf's *History* is an indispensable work of reference for all students of philosophy, unique in its complete coverage of philosophic thought from the time of St. Augustine to Nicholas of Cusa and in its unpedantic yet thorough scholarship. E.K.

**Candle In Umbria.** The Story of Saint Clare of Assisi. By a Poor Clare Nun in the Poor Clare Monastery of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Roswell, New Mexico. 1953. 28 pages. A verse play in 4 acts, 8 scenes, suitable for production by college students or professionally directed high school groups. Copies may be purchased from the Poor Clare Monastery of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Route 1,

Box 285-C, Roswell, New Mexico (\$1.00 a copy, including music for St. Francis' *Canticle of the Sun*).

*Candle in Umbria* commemorates the seven hundredth anniversary of the death of St. Clare and portrays the outstanding events in her life, showing her as a worthy light for the many who have followed her way of complete giving to God. On the whole it is well written, even if at times the piety seems overly sweet. One feels too that Clare presented in a simpler, more Franciscan way would be more effective. S.C.

**Return To The Fountainhead.** Tercentenary Addresses by Cardinal Gerlier and Other Churchmen. An English Translation by the Sisters of St. Joseph, Fontbonne College. Order from Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, Wydown and Big Bend Blvd, St. Louis, Missouri. 1952. 143 pages cloth \$3.00.

This is an English translation of the addresses given in July 1950 in France for the tercentenary of the founding of the Sisters of St. Joseph. It will be of interest chiefly to members of that order. Although the theme is their joy and gratitude, yet questions are touched on that are of vital concern to religious of other communities, namely, the means of attracting new members and the way of reconciling the contemplative with the active life. Then, too, St. Joseph, who is too often forgotten, is presented as both lovable and strong. S.C.

**The Collected Works of Abbot Vonier.** Volume Two, The Church and the Sacraments. The Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland. 1952. 360 pages, cloth \$5.00.

This second volume of the gathered works of the brilliant Abbot-theologian contains his three books entitled, *The Spirit and the Bride*, *The People of God*, and *A Key to the Doctrine of the Eucharist*. The first volume (reviewed in *Sponsa Regis*, December, 1952, page 112) contained *The Christian Mind*, *The Personality of Christ*, *The Victory of Christ*, and *The Divine Motherhood*. The set, when completed, will comprise three volumes. We must express here our deep and lasting gratitude to the Newman Press for making this most valuable semi-popular theology in English available once more.

The great Abbot of Buckfast died in 1938. He led an active life filled with the fruit of study and prayer, and became a restorer, not only of his great abbey church, but also of great



Christian thought and theology, which is embodied in some fifteen volumes and many treatises. We hope that a complete story of his life will also find its way into print, so that his admirers may receive the edifying and more personal key to his writings.

Abbot Anscar Vonier's greatest work, *A Key to the Doctrine of the Eucharist*, is part of the present volume. It is truly a great work which has had a most decisive influence on modern Catholic thought by leading us all back to the essentially sacramental nature of the Mass. Those students who, like the reviewer, had to delve into many theories on the Eucharistic Sacrifice, know how to appreciate the simplicity and traditional truth set forth by the Abbot on the basis of St. Thomas.

One of the marks of Abbot Vonier's writing is abundantly shown forth in our volume, namely, his dogmatic view of the Church as the Bride and Mystical Body. Another mark is that devotion is built on clear and elevated theology. His faith is faith in the Mysteries, and that means not darkness, but new light. His Christian mind is caught up into the joy-giving light of revelation, and the whole elevated soul experiences the hope and victory and enthusiasm of divine faith. Few writers have grasped or expressed the supernatural spirit so successfully as Abbot Vonier, and the reader cannot help but catch the same light and enthusiasm.

P.R.B.

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by

Winfried Herbst, S.D.S.

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